

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
October 24, 2005

Committee members present: Russ Brubaker, Committee Chair, Neal Adams, Doug Dunham, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Jeff Hou, Cheryl Klinker, Sharon Lee, Peter Lukevich, Adrian Moroles, Joyce Moty, Alec Stephens

Staff present: Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks, Catherine Anstett, Susan Golub, Donald Harris, Dewey Potter, Kathy Whitman

Committee Business: The meeting was called to order and meeting agenda was approved. Consideration of the September 26 minutes will be at the next meeting.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience: **Jim Jensen** of Groundswell Northwest spoke in favor of the staff recommendation to change the location for the Ballard acquisition. The community presented a slate of projects a few years ago and received a positive recommendation from the Committee and the City Council for Opportunity Fund money for the acquisitions. The staff recommendation fits with the community priorities while the named site was not a high priority for the community. The property the staff is recommending for acquisition on 17th is adjacent to previously purchased park property and makes better sense than the originally named site.

Mid-Term Report: Dewey Potter, Parks Communications Manager, presented ideas for the Levy Mid-Term Report. The report is a requirement of the Levy Ordinance and it is to be the Oversight Committee's report. The format will be similar to the Annual Reports the Committee has made each year – the mid-term report will have information from the first four years of the Levy.

Areas of emphasis in the report will be:

- Leadership by the Oversight Committee;
- Benefits the Levy brings to every neighborhood;
- Responsible fiscal management;
- Relationship to neighborhood plans and Parks Plan 2000;
- Sustainable elements;
- Leveraged funds.

Distribution will be primarily electronic, in keeping with the City's "Paper Cuts" initiative. The report will be sent to all who have participated in Pro Parks projects. Printed copies will be distributed to public officials, community centers and libraries.

Doug Dunham asked questions about the summary chart that will be included in the Levy. Catherine Anstett replied that the data would be cumulative Levy dollars through the end of 2004, representing the mid-point of the Levy.

Alec Stephens asked about the data for 2005, which will be almost over when the report comes out. Deputy Superintendent Brooks replied that the report will show financial data through the end of 2004, the mid-point of the Levy, as specified in the Levy Ordinance. Information from 2005 will be in the 2005 Annual Report, and to include this information in the mid-term report would delay the report because the final 2005 numbers won't be available until several months into 2005. Russ Brubaker noted that the mid-term report should direct citizens to the 2005 Annual Report for '05 information.

Cheryl Klinker suggested the introduction to the report note that the Oversight Committee emphasized acquisition during the first round of the Opportunity Fund and emphasized development of the first round acquisitions during the second round, so that the projects could be finished.

Peter Lukevich cited the impressive, phenomenal amount of community involvement in Pro Parks projects and wanted the report to highlight this contribution. In this regard, Terry Home asked if there had been an accounting of volunteer hours, and if so, this should be included in the report. Ms. Potter replied that she would see if there was an accounting. Ms. Moty suggested contacting the Department of Neighborhoods for some of this information.

Neal Adams asked who the target audience is for the report and recommended that the diversity of the Oversight Committee and the breadth of the spending be included. Ms. Potter replied that the target audience is the citizens of Seattle. Mr. Adams also expressed a concern about the "Paper Cut" initiative inhibiting distribution of the report to citizens.

Peter Lukevich suggested:

- Highlighting the unique nature of the 1% for the Arts program;
- Using a video message from the Committee Chair and Superintendent for the e-mail distribution and internet posting of the report;
- The Levy Ordinance calling for this report should override the "Paper Cut" initiative – distribution of this document should be exempt from the Paper Cut" directive.

Sharon Lee noted how difficult staff work has been, especially regarding the preservation of open space, and wants the report to be sure to include the importance of preserving open space – now more than ever.

Mr. Brubaker stated the report should start off with a message from the Committee thanking the community and staff for all the hard work.

Adrian Moroles asked whether there were plans for translating the report into other languages. Ms. Potter replied that she would get an estimate for the costs associated with translations. Mr. Stephens and Mr. Adams concurred regarding the importance of providing translations in a multi-lingual city.

Don Harper suggested correlating the e-mail and regular mailing lists to reduce mailing costs. Ms. Lee recommended mailing a postcard flyer to citizens which would direct them to the full report on the internet. This could be widely distributed at less cost than the full report. Both Mr. Dunham and Mr. Brubaker encouraged lots of photographs in the report. Mr. Lukevich recommended using newspaper op-ed column and editorial boards to get the message to the citizens.

Ms. Potter will return for the November 28 meeting with a draft of the report.

Ballard Acquisition: Donald Harris presented a staff recommendation to the Committee changing the location for a Ballard property acquisition from the Monroe Substation to an alternate site at 1702 NW 62nd Street. The Monroe substation was named in the Levy Resolution, but after staff analysis and community review, Parks concluded that the substation is not an optimal location for a new park. It is small, mid-block and on a busy arterial. As the Committee heard during the public comment period, the Ballard community supports the staff recommendation to change the location for this acquisition.

Sharon Lee asked Mr. Harris what would happen to the substation, if Parks does not buy it. Mr. Harris responded that City Light would probably surplus the property and sell it. Committee members spoke in favor of the staff recommendation and approved a motion directing staff to pursue the 17th Avenue property, contingent on receiving support from the Northwest District Council.

I-5 Open Space – St. Marks Greenbelt: Donald Harris noted that while this project does not require a formal action from the Committee, staff wanted to provide information on a purchase that is being pursued adjacent to the St. Marks Greenbelt. The Levy Ordinance provides for the expenditure of Green Spaces Acquisition funding for areas not strictly within a greenbelt boundary.

Within the St. Marks Greenbelt there are no willing sellers. However, adjacent to the Greenbelt and next to the public stairway that connects to the Greenbelt, there are vacant, wooded properties with willing sellers. Purchase of these properties would provide an important wooded buffer that will not be replaced with development. Pileated woodpeckers have been seen in the targeted properties. In addition, the new Colonnade Park is in this same area and the targeted property will provide a link from Capital Hill through Colonnade to Lake Union. Also, the targeted properties provide a natural area buffer for gardens that are located adjacent to the stairway that have been donated to the City.

In response to a question from Mr. Brubaker, Mr. Harris responded that support for this purchase has been received from the Trust for Public Land and the Seattle Park Foundation, and the mountain bike community working with the Colonnade Park project.

In response to a question from Ms. Klinker, Mr. Harris stated that Parks would not be clearing the trees from the property; the area will remain natural habitat. Mr. Holme questioned whether the property adjacent to Colonnade Park is really large enough to be a

buildable lot, and also expressed concern about what may happen to this property with a future redevelopment of I-5. Mr. Harris responded that the property is on the market and that the direction of property sales in the City has been for building on all available property. Regarding I-5, the State would have to compensate the City for any parkland that is used for highway.

Mr. Adams noted that he walks through this corridor and that it is heavily used by walking commuters and supports the staff recommendation. In citing his support, Mr. Brubaker noted the importance of preserving and protecting the garden.

A motion was approved expressing support for the staff proposal.

Pro Parks Programming: Kathy Whitman, Parks Aquatic Manager, made a power point presentation describing the Pro Parks Levy programming. In addition to her aquatics duties, Ms. Whitman is the coordinator for the Levy programming. She provided an overview of all Pro Parks Programs.

There are 3 broad program areas and 15 specific programs:

1. Environmental Stewardship, which includes the following specific programs:
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Tree Maintenance
 - Natural Areas
 - Landscape & Athletic Field Maintenance
2. Enhanced Park and Facility Maintenance, which includes the following specific programs:
 - Peak Use Maintenance
 - Comfort Station Cleaning
 - Recreation Center Cleaning
 - Pool Cleaning
3. Recreation, which includes the following specific programs:
 - Teen Development;
 - Kids Program Access;
 - Youth/Teen Development Fund;
 - Teen Transportation Fund;
 - Wading Pools;
 - Learn to Swim;
 - Senior Adult Programs.

Ms. Whitman described the program goals, staffing and budget for each of the programs.

Regarding the Pro Parks funded trail crew, Mr. Brubaker asked how much funding was still remaining to be spent for this program. Ms. Whitman will provide this information to the Committee for its next meeting.

Regarding enhanced litter removal, Mr. Harper noted that there has been a problem with litter pick-up in Queen Anne parks and that the community had done a study which showed that there was not good litter removal. Ms. Moty noted that citizens should take more responsibility for litter removal and that Parks should encourage citizens to litter less. Mr. Holme noted that in the parks around Lake Washington staff has been doing a good job with litter removal, and Mr. Brubaker concurred regarding the West Seattle parks near his home.

Regarding enhanced comfort station cleaning, Mr. Lukevich stated that the comfort stations have been much cleaner, especially at special events. Mr. Brubaker asked Ms. Whitman to provide him with the exact locations that were receiving the enhanced comfort station cleaning.

Responding to a question about facility cleaning, Ms. Whitman remarked that the regular maintenance crew generally starts its day at 10:00 a.m. to get some cleaning accomplished before the facility is open to the public and that the enhanced, Pro Parks funded crew, generally work a later shift to work in the building after the evening programs are completed.

Regarding the Learn to Swim program, Ms. Whitman described Parks efforts to revise this program after the original plan could not be followed because the Seattle School District decided 4th grade students could not go to swim classes during school hours. The new plan involves vouchers and scholarships and extensive outreach, including a brochure in 11 languages. However the program is reaching significantly fewer children that had been hoped for the program: less than 20% of eligible children are participating. Mr. Lukevich asked what would happen with the project funding if not all is going to be spent for the Learn to Swim program. Ms. Whitman remarked that some of the funding has been redirected within the recreation category. Mr. Adams suggested Parks think creatively when trying to expand the program to reach more children.

Ms. Whitman noted that all Environmental Stewardship and Recreation funding ends when the Levy expires in 2008; the Enhanced Maintenance funding is being gradually transferred to the General Fund. In response to a question, Deputy Superintendent Brooks noted that Parks is developing a Strategic Business Plan which is looking at what programs we can keep and how they will be funded after the Levy expires. Parks will not be able to do everything. A presentation on the Strategic Business Plan will be made to the Oversight Committee in the first quarter of 2006.

At the request of Mr. Stephens, staff will make copies of the power point slide show for Committee members.

Committee Business: Ms. Golub reported that the next Committee meeting will be Monday, November 28 and that there will not be a meeting in December.